

Negro, Colonization of - 1926

See Also. Africa, Current, (Back to Africa Movement.)

Race Problem: Mexico.

Chicago Abendpost Comments On Buying State For Negroes

Chicago Abendpost, October 6,
1926, Editorial

Through the newspapers ran the news that a movement was in progress among the colored people here which purposed to gather all the Negroes of the country into one state, to buy up all the land there and then to take over themselves the government of the state. The thought in itself is not bad, even if it is not exactly new; but whether it is practical is another question. Immediately after the Civil War it perhaps might have been possible of accomplishment. Then perhaps one, or even two of the southern states could have been given over to the colored folk for concentration without altogether too much expense. Today the way is more difficult. The land in all states under consideration represents too great value to be purchased without further ceremony. Moreover the governments of the states are opposed to such an intention. In the past century there was a series of sections which were comparatively loosely connected with the Union and which at the beginning of their colonization might have been relinquished to the colored folk. Today the citizens of no state inside the United States will renounce their rights and surrender the government and administration to colored people. Also the right of freedom of movement is contrary to the proposal. No citizen can be compelled to give up his land. The government protects him from that. The exceptions are closely circumscribed.

Theoretically the possibility might bear examination that the fourteen million colored citizens of the country might produce sufficient money to buy all the land for sale inside a state, and to apportion it among the members of their race. But to shelter fourteen million people in one state would require a rather large state. Of course there are always a few states which have a very large area and at the same time are so thinly inhabited that the removal of the present inhabitants would present no insurmountable difficulties. But these large areas also might not be adapted to the colonization of fourteen million Negroes. Then also there would be

the question whether to concentrate all the colored people of the land into one state would really be the best solution of the problem, the best way out. It would be still necessary to wait to find out whether the Negroes would in fact be more content with the conditions in their state than they are at present. For they are striving not only for political equality, which belongs to them under the constitution, but almost still more for social equality. Their social isolation might possibly come more strongly into consciousness when they are concentrated in a single state than today while they live among the whites. For it is to be foreseen that inhabitants of the remaining states would more than ever separate themselves from the Negro, if not through written laws and ordinances, at least by the building up of a law of custom.

After all it is not necessary to throw away the whole thought to start with as absurd and impracticable. On the contrary it would be better to discuss and examine it publicly in detail. The presence of the colored people in the American Union has unquestionably created a difficult problem, on the solution of which many heads have worked without success. In the interest of the Negroes toward whom the United States has the most serious moral obligations, no proposal for a solution coming from them should be rejected without consideration. The fact should be welcomed that also the colored people on their part exhibit the effort to find a way to live inside the Union which avoids constantly recurring clashes between them and the white population or which at least offers prospects of so doing.